## **BOOK REVIEW**

## Blind Man's Bluff, The Untold Story of American Submarine Espionage

by Sherry Sontag and Christopher Drew with Annette Lawrence Drew read by Tony Roberts reviewed by Joseph C. Piff

The Cold War is over! It must be, or this book would never have been published, at least not with all of the detail that is included. <u>Blind Man's Bluff</u> covers the period from World War II through the Clinton Administration. It reveals actual targets of espionage, the submarines and their captains that pursued them, the lessons learned when things went right and when they went wrong, and the people who investigated, and techniques used to investigate, the failures.

I purchased the version on tape. As read by Tony Roberts, it is entirely enthralling. He changes his voice as characters change, even faking an accent when speaking for a Russian. The taped version is abridged.

As we work to design and build the USS VIRGINIA class, a submarine which we will be able to tailor to specific missions, it is interesting to see what the spook world was given to pursue the most dangerous spy missions conducted on the high seas. Until USS PARCHE, no submarines were specifically built for spy missions – they were all modified older hulls, sometimes hulls that were long past their prime. The research that went into developing the capability to perform these missions should be especially interesting to the scientific community. Of special note is the amount of time that went by between fielding a capability that did not work, e.g., underwater video, until the point where the problem was corrected.

If you enjoy a great spy novel, this book is for you – especially since all of the content is true!

Another interesting part of the book is the information presented on the treasonous U.S. personnel John A. Walker, Jr., and Ronald W. Pelton and the work performed to identify them. Especially revealing is how widespread was the disbelief that Americans would commit espionage, even though the facts pointed strongly to such a possibility.

Then there were the submarine on submarine collisions and the complete losses of submarines, many times for unknown reasons. The effort the US Navy and the USSR Navy put into finding lost subs (and their crews) makes for great reading, again especially from a technological point of view.

The book closes with a brief discussion of what the submarine force is doing now.

I found this book great listening for my daily commute and I think those of you involved with submarine and spy technology will find it interesting too. If you just like a good spy novel, only this time with real names and real events, you'll enjoy it too.